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WHAT LATIN IN THE SECOND YEAR?

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The question as to what Latin should be read in the second year of the high school is not a new one. It has been a matter of general discussion in books, magazines, and addresses for the past eighteen or twenty years. To become acquainted with the various ideas expressed on the subject one has only to read the report of the Committee of Ten to the National Education Association in 1893, the discussion by Mr. Bennett in his *Teaching of Latin and Greek*, Dr. Lodge in *Teachers College Record* for May-September, 1902, and the more recent report of the Committee of Fifteen on College-Entrance Requirements. I shall, therefore, say little that is new, for, as Solomon said, "There is nothing new under the sun." It is my desire and purpose merely to give you my opinion on the subject, together with the results of my observation and experiments in the classroom during the past four years.

The content and scope of any course of study depend on the purpose it is intended to achieve. Under the old régime, Latin was studied largely as an end in itself. Little attention was paid to the more humanistic and practical sides of the work. Guided by such an idea, it would matter little what author or extracts from authors were read in different years, if only the language were suited to the advancement of the student and were of proper classical style. Saner ideas, however, now obtain. Mr. Bennett, for example, says that "the only rational justification of the study of Latin in our secondary schools seems to me to be found in its unique effect in stimulating and elevating the pupil's intellectual processes, and most of all in the increased mastery over the resources of the mother-tongue which it confers." It seems to me that Mr. Bennett has omitted one of the chief ends to be achieved in Latin study, and that is an acquaintance with the classical masterpieces of literature, which have been the inspiration largely of all

modern literature. At no other place in the high school is that knowledge given, and yet, as Dr. Eben Alexander, former minister to Greece, said, "The best appreciation and understanding of all modern literature can be had only by those who are familiar with the works of the ancient classical writers." I think we teachers of Latin lose sight of this fact too often in directing the reading of our students, and yet it should be one of the chief guiding principles in the choice of authors read in the high-school course.

If the ideal of the old régime, that the mastery of the Latin is an end in itself, be correct, or if Mr. Bennett's ideals, quoted above, of the results achieved in the study of Latin cover the ideal field of achievement, there is little difference whether the student in the second year reads Caesar alone, or Nepos alone, or any other author or combination of authors, provided only that the Latin read is purely classical in style and sufficiently easy. The subject-matter and range of the Latin read are of minor importance, so long as the language is of proper purity, if the content and literary excellence are not objects of special study. Caesar affords just as good a mental gymnasium for the development of Latin strength and a mastery over the resources of the mother-tongue as a wider range of reading of similar grade; but does it introduce the student to the literature and life of the Roman world commensurate with the effort and length of time usually spent in its reading? "If the student's introduction to the literature of the Romans," says Dr. Arrowsmith, "is to arouse a desire for further acquaintance with that literature, the material offered him should be attractive in itself and of enough variety to sustain his interest." I shall not raise the question as to whether Caesar should be entirely eliminated from the course in the second year, which was the recommendation of the Committee of Ten in 1893. To such a question I should give a most emphatic negative, for experience has failed as yet to produce a suitable substitute. I shall maintain, however, that at least one-half of the second year should be devoted to the reading of selected portions of other authors, thus giving the student a wider and more interesting acquaintance with Latin literature, without sacrificing any of the disciplinary or philological ends which are now achieved by the reading of Caesar alone.

Only 4 per cent of the students in the high school go on into college. In view of this fact it seems evident that its curriculum should be made to suit the needs of the 96 per cent who go immediately into active life. Of the many authors of merit and prominence in Latin literature the high-school student is introduced, at first hand, to only three. This would not be such an injustice to the 96 per cent of students who never go to college if the high school offered them any means of studying a reasonable portion of the remaining masterpieces of Latin literature even in translations, bad as that is as a means of studying any literature written originally in a foreign tongue. Literary critics tell us that the great majority of our English literary producers, particularly of poetry, went for their inspiration and models to the classical masterpieces, and yet 96 per cent of the high-school students are to be introduced to only two, or at best three, of the writers of these original fountain-sources of modern literature. It seems logical, therefore, that a wider range of reading should be offered the high-school student, even though we should render ourselves liable to the criticism of achieving breadth at the expense of intensity.

There has been in recent years a marked desire, expressed by at least an intelligent minority of Latin teachers in this country, to see a wider range of reading adopted for the second year's work. Whether the object be to enrich by broadening, or to rearrange the present reading, or to provide a more gradual introduction to Caesar, there is a wide demand for some change in the present inherited limitations, and the obstacles in the way of such a change are fast disappearing. The various opinions, to sum them up, seem to be about as follows: (1) that Nepos be substituted for Caesar; (2) that Nepos be made optional with Caesar; (3) that a portion of Caesar be eliminated and either his *Civil War*, or Nepos, or other authors be drawn upon to fill up the year's reading. The Committee of Ten of the National Education Association, in 1893, formally advised the adoption of either the first or second of these, while the Committee of Fifteen on College-Entrance Requirements, in its report to the American Philological Association in 1909, recommended that all college-entrance examinations omit

Caesar entirely in the *prescribed* reading, in order that schools might be left free to select any author or authors for the second year's reading, provided only that the reading be equal in extent to the four books of Caesar. The committee was moved in making this recommendation by a conviction, to quote their words, that it would be "wise to open the way for a wider range of reading" in the second as well as in each of the two remaining years. This, if generally adopted, will allow the high school to select its reading-matter in the interest of the 96 per cent who do not go into college without disregarding the needs of the 4 per cent who must take college-entrance examinations. Many of the leading colleges have already acted favorably on the recommendation, and it seems certain that practically all will do so. It is to be hoped that the high schools, now that they are in all probability to be released from the specter of the former iron-clad college-entrance examinations so far as the Latin is concerned, will adopt a wider range of reading in the second year.

Let us study for a moment the problems before us. There are many reasons, other than a desire for a wider range of reading, why the second year's work in Latin should not be spent wholly on the first four books of Caesar. No one will deny that the *Gallic War* is noted for its purity of diction and the accuracy of its style, that it has a precision and definiteness of expression that is admirable, and yet my experience during the past four years with a mature set of students, ranging from the age of 17 to 30—students, the majority of whom have themselves already taught—has led me to believe that the *Gallic War* is too difficult reading for at least the first third of the second year. For example, let us notice the conditional sentence. Of the 93 instances of this in the four books of Caesar, 70 appear in the indirect discourse, which develops many difficult matters connected with attraction and sequence. In the six orations of Cicero, on the other hand, only 11 out of 153 conditional sentences appear in the indirect discourse. Caesar's sentences are certainly very often long and complicated, containing in many instances as much thought as should be found in three or four sentences. As an example of this let us notice that very long sentence of 139 words in Book ii, chap. 25, which contains 9 ablative

absolutes, 11 indirect-discourse clauses, and 4 other subordinate clauses. Even Dr. Lodge, who is the most staunch defender, in this country, of Caesar as the best author for second-year reading, makes the statement that "almost everyone agrees that Caesar is a difficult author." Dr. Goodell says that Caesar was the most difficult Latin ever read by him. The Committee of Ten, referred to above, assigned this as the first and most important of three reasons for their recommendation that Nepos either be substituted for, or be made optional with, Caesar. I do not believe that this fact is sufficient reason for the elimination of Caesar altogether, for experience has shown, wherever this has been done, that the experiments have failed to achieve the end desired, nor do I believe that it would be best to make Nepos optional with Caesar. I do believe, however, that those portions of Caesar which are of more vital interest and of less difficulty, about one-half of the four books in amount, as I shall outline later, should be read, but only after some two or three months have been spent in reading Nepos, Curtius, or some other Latin of sufficient ease and of proper classical style.

Again, it might be contended with correctness that there is a sameness, a monotonous sameness, in Caesar's style of narration, as well as in his syntax and vocabulary, that is deadening to the interest of the average pupil. Mr. Bennett, notwithstanding the fact that he defends the use of Caesar as the sole reading in the second year on the ground that no better has been found, expresses this thought when he says that "with the exception of a few brief chapters on the customs of the Gauls, Germans, and Britons, all of Caesar's commentaries on the Gallic War might easily be summed up in a few brief lines, to the effect that for seven years he waged unceasing war against the Gallic and German tribes and finally subdued them all." The purpose, and particularly the hurried method, of its composition could hardly be expected to produce any other type of literature. His language, too, though concise, concrete, and pure, only serves to heighten the monotony of his narration. For example, the ablative absolute occurs in the four books almost twice as often as in Cicero and Virgil combined, or about four times as often as in either of these authors in propor-

tion to the amount of the matter. Again, the indirect discourse occurs almost as often in Caesar as in both Cicero and Virgil combined. In a word, the *ἐντεῦθεν ἐξελαύνει* style of narration is prevalent enough in Caesar to produce a dearth of interest if it is read during the whole year.

I shall mention only one other matter in this connection, and I shall not be surprised if some of you do not accept the idea I shall express. If the pupil is expected, in the reading of Latin, to be introduced to the best of Latin literature, I believe that spending a full year in reading Caesar is a great mistake. Great masterpieces of literature do not happen by accident, nor are they ever the hasty effort of a man engaged in an occupation so little conducive to literary work as was Caesar's. It is quite plain that Caesar had no purpose of writing a work of real literary merit when he sat down in his Gallic winter quarters after the battle of Alesia to write his *Commentaries*. They were written hurriedly as a defense of his whole Gallic policy and were intended to serve an immediate political purpose. I must confess that neither as a student nor as a teacher have Caesar's *Commentaries* appealed to me as a work of great literary merit. I realize well that the majority of the literary critics take the opposite position, yet after teaching and studying the *Commentaries* for ten years I am ready to agree, with only a small degree of reservation, with Mr. Bennett when he says that "nothing could be more grotesque to the minds of most than to attribute a literary character or quality to Caesar." He goes on to say that "he (Caesar) simply gives us a plain and colorless statement of facts, which makes hardly any more approach to literary charm than does a clear statement of a proposition in geometry." At any rate, whether this position is tenable or not, the 96 per cent of the high-school students who never reach the college have a right to expect that the effort and time spent on their Latin work in the second year should introduce them to more of the grandeur of classical literature than can be afforded by a study of Caesar alone.

These considerations, along with others, have led me to make experiments in my work during the past two years along the line of introducing a broader course of reading in the second year. My

idea has been that, notwithstanding the drawbacks mentioned above, Caesar must remain the chief author read in the second year. And yet these drawbacks are of sufficient gravity to justify the shortening and logical arrangement of the matter taken from Caesar and the addition of certain other reading taken from authors of the same grade and of undoubted literary merit. For this purpose Nepos, Curtius, Catullus, or even Cicero, Livy, and Horace might be drawn upon.

With this idea in mind, and with the experience gained from two years of experiment, I wish to offer for your consideration a tentative outline of Latin reading for the second year's work. I shall take as a limit in amount the four books of Caesar, which in a text with type of average size contain 2,532 lines. This course presupposes the reading of simple Latin passages for three weeks or a month at the close of the first year's work. Before entering upon the reading of Caesar in the second year I would suggest that two or three Lives of Nepos be read. The best for our purpose perhaps are those of Hannibal and Themistocles, which contain about 300 lines. The short life of Cato might be added, bringing the number of lines up to about 375 or 400. I would follow this with about 1,250 lines, or about half of the four books, of Caesar, as follows: Book i, chap. 1, the Geography of Gaul, 23 lines; Book iv, chaps. 20-36, the First Invasion of Britain, 266 lines; Book v, chaps. 1-23, the Second Invasion of Britain, 384 lines; Book iv, chaps. 1-19, the First Invasion of Germany, 279 lines; Book vi, chaps. 9-29, the Second Invasion of Germany, 330 lines. These passages are chosen because they do not include the very difficult indirect-discourse passages and because they introduce the student to the campaigns against his early Teutonic and Celtic or British ancestors. Thus far about 1,600 lines have been proposed, or some 900 less than the amount in the four books of Caesar. Subtracting 400 lines because of the extra time and effort required in attacking matter from new authors, we shall still have the possibility of reading 500 lines in the latter part of the year. These may be taken from Cicero's easy essays and letters, or even from Livy's *Stories of Early Roman History*, with additional extracts of poetry selected from Ovid, Catullus, Horace, and Virgil. These

selections are, of course, to be made by the teacher to suit the ability of the class. Some may consider, as I did before I made the experiment, that these authors are too difficult for students at any stage of the second year. I have found it possible, however, to use matter from all of the above authors without making too great demands upon the ability of the student.

Several difficulties will at once appear evident in this course, and yet they are not so great, I feel sure, as the advantages derived from it. In the first place, the vocabulary will be somewhat larger than that required in reading Caesar alone. In answer to this I shall say that if we allow the matter of a small increase in vocabulary to dictate and control what literature our students shall read we shall have an aggravated spectacle of the tail wagging the dog. It seems to me that the elimination of a portion of the Caesarian vocabulary, dealing as it does almost entirely with objects and concepts of military life, and the substitution of a large number of words dealing more nearly with objects and ideas common to the life of the student, which the broader range of reading would afford, would be a decided gain. Surely the difficulty of having to master a slight increase in vocabulary will be more than compensated by the enlarged array of ideas presented for thought, for, as Dr. Arrowsmith has said, "if he (the student) is to appreciate the beauties of language, he should be equipped with the widest range of thought and vocabulary possible."

Again, the syntax of the course offered may cover a wider field and present a greater number of categories than that of Caesar alone. And yet it can scarcely be more difficult of mastery. There are no more difficult matters of syntax found in the reading of the course suggested than the conditional sentence in the indirect discourse, of which there are seventy in the four books of Caesar. Other similar examples might be cited. The wider range of syntax will, at any rate, be a better preparation for the reading of Cicero and Virgil later than the narrower and more difficult constructions met in Caesar alone. More varied, but certainly no more difficult, syntax will be found in this course.

A third objection, and one I have often heard urged as a most serious one against introducing a wider range of reading in any

of the high-school years, is that the students' efforts and interest will be dissipated by shifting from one author to another, that literature cannot be properly studied by reading authors in small quantities. The present study of Caesar can hardly meet the approval of persons who hold this view, it seems to me, for in reading only the first four books of Caesar we leave off some of the most interesting portions of Caesar, which are logically connected with parts of the books now read. The Second Invasion of Britain in Book v should certainly be read in connection with the First Invasion in Book iv. Likewise, the Second Invasion of Germany in Book vi should logically be read along with the First Invasion in Book iv. The course of reading which I have recommended is certainly no more illogical than the present accepted course. If Caesar's *Commentaries* were a piece of literature composed upon definite principles of logical analysis in its subject-matter, and not simply upon a chronological basis, there might be more logic in the demand that our students should begin with chap. 1 of Book i, and omit not a single line through to the end of the year's work. Many of the best authorities have urged that either Book ii or Book iv be read before Book i, thus breaking the regular order, and even Dr. Lodge has suggested that it might be well to omit the latter portion of Book i. It seems to me that interest will best be subserved and the proper study of literature accomplished upon saner and more logical grounds by rearranging certain portions and discarding others, as suggested above.

In conclusion, let me repeat that I have used the course I have outlined for you during the past two years and I am thoroughly pleased with the results of my experiment. I believe that a trial of it by teachers of Latin in secondary schools will confirm and establish my contention as to its advantages.